



Former Chief of Staff of the Royal Navy Discharged with Dishonor: Loses Rank but Not Pension

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London, July 2025 – The former head of the Royal Navy, Admiral Sir Ben Key, has lost his rank but will retain his pension, as confirmed by the British Ministry of Defence. The decision follows an [internal investigation](#) that revealed his behavior "fell short of the values and standards expected" from service personnel.

Sir Ben Key, 59, had been suspended from his role as First Sea Lord in May following allegations of an extramarital affair with a subordinate. **A thorough investigation led to the "termination of his service and appointment," as stated in a Ministry of Defence communiqué.**

"Admiral Sir Ben Key's behavior was found to be significantly below the values and standards expected from service personnel," reads the Ministry of Defence statement. "This resulted in the termination of his service and appointment."

Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, [Chief of the Defence Staff](#), emphasized the importance of these standards: **"We expect the highest standards of behavior from our service personnel and civilian officials. We investigate all allegations of inappropriate behavior and will take robust action against anyone found to be below our standards, regardless of their seniority."**

Following the confirmation of his discharge, Sir Ben Key released a statement expressing deep regret: "Serving as First Sea Lord has been one of the greatest privileges of my life, and I pay tribute to the dedicated and professional officers, sailors, Royal Marines, and civilian officials who make up the Royal Navy." He then added: "I deeply regret my conduct in the spring of last year, which was well below the standard I set for myself and for the Royal Navy. Therefore, I fully accept the decision of the Defence Council."

He concluded his statement by apologizing to those he personally hurt and to all Royal Navy personnel, expressing gratitude for the support of his wife, family, and friends during this difficult time.

Sir Ben Key, father of three and married, joined the Royal Navy in 1984 as a university cadet. Over his long career, he qualified as a helicopter crew member and as a Principal Warfare Officer. He commanded four ships, including the minesweeper HMS Sandown, the frigates HMS Iron Duke and Lancaster, and the aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious. Sir Ben was due to retire from his position this summer, having led the Royal Navy since 2021. The First Sea Lord is the professional head of the Royal Navy and a member of the Defence Council.

News link: <https://www.forcesnews.com/services/navy/sacked-former-first-sea-lord-loses-admiral-rank-not-pension-ministry-defence-says>